

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) joined high school students and others as she was recognized for her commitment to after school programs designed to benefit at-risk youth in Western New York.

Slaughter was honored by the Police Athletic Leagues of Niagara Falls and Buffalo during an event at which she announced \$200,000 in federal funding for both chapters from the FY2009 Federal Appropriations Bill. Each city will receive \$100,000 through a Department of Justice Juvenile Justice account.

"I'm so happy to be here today because these funds are an investment in our children and helps remind them that they are important, that their input in our community is relevant, and that we care about their development," said Slaughter. "We are counting on them to help solve the problems not only of today, but of tomorrow."

The Police Athletic League of Buffalo's funding will enable them to continue and expand upon programs to benefit at-risk youth in the City of Buffalo across seven community centers in downtown Buffalo. Specifically it will support basketball and baseball leagues, Summer Cops & Kids Camps and Clinics, Learn To Skate program, Summer and Fall Youth Tennis, and one of the only Youth Boxing programs in the area. PAL also provides family oriented activities such as New Year's Eve Ball Drop in downtown Buffalo; Winterfest, a celebration of Buffalo's winters in February; Gus Macker Basketball Tournament in partnership with Kids Escaping Drugs.

In Niagara Falls, funding will be used to support the area's largest scholarship program, drink and drive diversion programs, and peer literacy programs. It will also fund the popular basketball, soccer and lacrosse programs.

"Congresswoman Louise Slaughter has been an advocate for the Niagara Police Athletic League for two decades," said Lt. Art Eberhart (ret), Executive Director, Niagara PAL. "Her commitment to youth is exemplary, her support has allowed, and will continue to allow, Niagara

PAL to provide quality, positive programming for all our kids."

Dennis J. Richards, Chief of Detectives and President of the Buffalo PAL Board said, "We at Buffalo PAL are extremely grateful to Congresswoman Slaughter for her generosity in making these funds available to the youngsters in our programs. Our mission at PAL is to provide positive experiences for these youngsters in safe and secure facilities under the supervision of trained and dedicated personnel. This funding will help us to enhance the programming we already provide and allow more children to take advantage of PAL services."

Susan M. Gonzalez, PAL's Executive Director, added, "Congresswoman Slaughter's commitment to the youth of the City of Buffalo will enable PAL to offer enhanced after-school activities at our seven community centers and to expand our summertime program activities. It is no secret that many of the children that participate in PAL programming are from single parent families with very low incomes. The opportunities we offer these children are essential to their development as responsible young adults."

The Buffalo PAL programs have impacted children's lives for over 50 years. This year, Niagara PAL will be celebrating its 40th year of service, a testament to both programs success and accomplishments.